



# **Alaska Alternate Assessment**

## **Quarterly Report**

July 1 through September 30, 2008

Dillard Research Associates  
October 8, 2008

## **Quarterly Report**

July 1, 2008 through September 30, 2008

### **Overview**

Over the past quarter, Dillard Research Associates has revised the quality assurance procedures, completed recommendations for committee membership for the Content and Bias Review; completed a review of Assessment Administration Rules; submitted Writing Cousin Items and Reading Cousin Items; submitted the Science Technical Report; submitted functional specification documents for the Unofficial Student Report, the Official Student Report, and the Online Student Scoring and Reporting; implemented online systems changes; opened the Assessment system; and assisted in updating the training materials and co-presented at the New Mentor training on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Accomplishments**

#### **Revised the Quality Assurance Procedures**

DRA and EED agreed to hire Dr. Kim Sherman as a Project Manager at .50 FTE. Dr. Sherman participated in Audio Conferences beginning in mid-July, and began on August 1. Jerry Tindal (DRA), Kim Sherman (DRA), Aran Felix (EED) and Les Morse (EED) met in Seattle on August 1 to reach agreements on roles and responsibilities, to clarify deliverables and identify online changes and test updates to be made. Following the planning meeting, procedures for file naming, quality assurance, and document flow were revised to streamline and standardize work-flow between DRA and EED. Kim Sherman has assumed primary responsibility for facilitating weekly audio conferences, for returning minutes from meetings to all participants, and for managing the flow of documents (and document naming) between DRA and EED. Kim works closely with Sevrina Tindal, Jerry Tindal, and Aran Felix to facilitate the completion of deliverables.

#### **Recommended Committee Membership for the Content and Bias Review**

In early August, DRA made preliminary recommendations regarding appropriate participants to include in the 08-09 Bias and Content Review scheduled for January 28 through 30. This group will review the new Cousin Items for bias, stereotypes and access issues. In addition, the committee will analyze the new Cousin Items for alignment to the ExGLEs. Based on these recommendations, EED has recruited teachers to serve on the Content and Bias Review committee.

#### **Reviewed Assessment Administration Rules**

On September 2, DRA submitted a recommendation for slight adaptations to the current rules for participating in ELOS. The previous rule required assessors to administer the Standard Alternate Assessment until a student had taken and failed 3 consecutive items on 3 consecutive tasks, at which point the assessor could administer the Extended Levels of Support (ELOS) items. If the student participated in a content area assessment with the ELOS in the previous testing year, the assessor was permitted to begin testing with the ELOS in subsequent years.

After analyses were conducted of the frequency of performance levels for each task, descriptive statistics for each task, strand and total test, and categorization of proficiency

for all four levels. In general, the data indicate that at all grade levels, students who participated in ELOS demonstrated extremely low performance on each of the four assessments (Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science). DRA therefore recommended that the administration rule be changed so that ALL students begin with the standard administration, and the assessor may only administer the ELOS items if the student scores a zero on three consecutive items and three consecutive tasks.

### **Developed Writing Cousin Items and Reading Cousin Items**

The 2008-2009 Alternate Assessment (Standard and ELOS items) is essentially the same assessment as the 2007-2008 Alternate Assessment. This decision was made to: (a) provide an opportunity to conduct in-depth analysis on item functioning, and (b) provide Alaska's Qualified Assessors and Qualified Mentors an opportunity to enhance test administration skills by allowing them to offer the same assessment with the same administration rules as previously. An important activity during the 2008-2009 assessment year is the development and field testing of "cousin items" in all four content areas (Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science). Cousin Items are test items that are similar to existing items, assess similar content and grade level expectations, and are presented in a similar format to items currently included in the test. The development of sufficient cousin items will permit Alaska to produce a variety of test versions without exact duplication.

Cousin Items include the test item student materials, administration guidelines, and scoring protocols. Cousin Items are produced in the same format as the actual test. To date, Cousin Items have been developed for Reading and Writing content areas.

### **Submitted the Science Technical Report**

After receiving comments from the Peer Review process, the Technical Advisory Committee and EED, DRA reorganized and enhanced the Science Technical Report. Content of the Technical Report was cross-walked to criteria in the peer review.

The critical elements highlighted in the peer review (with examples of acceptable evidence) include (a) academic content standards, (b) academic achievement standards, (c) a statewide assessment system, (d) validity, (e) reliability, and (f) other dimensions of technical quality. DRA addressed the latter four requirements noted above, with other documents providing essential information on the standards and statewide assessment system. In addressing technical documentation, DRA first presented content evidence, then reliability, and finally address the other three areas noted in the peer review guidance: internal structures, criterion relations, and response processes.

In the end, both procedural and empirical evidence supported the claim that students with significant cognitive disabilities are achieving at various levels of proficiency on the alternate assessment.

A technical report for Reading, Writing, and Math is being developed, and will be submitted in the next quarter.

**Submitted Functional Specification Documents**

DRA submitted functional specification documents for the Unofficial Student Report (a report generated immediately following entry of a student's assessment scores), the Official Student Report (a report generated upon completion of data entry and mailed to districts by EED), and Online Scoring and Reporting functions. Functional specifications documents define the variables and mathematic 'if... then' relationships of fields in the assessment scoring and reporting system, as well as the document layout (font, font size, spacing, etc.) for the reports generated by the online system.

**Implemented Online Systems Changes**

At the planning meeting in Seattle on August 1, DRA and EED discussed and agreed to several changes to the online system to improve usability by Alaska's Qualified Assessors, Qualified Trainer/Mentors, and by EED staff. Improvements were suggested to allow improved monitoring of assessments administered, to align the online system to the new rule that all students who qualify for the Alternate Assessment begin with the Standard Administration, to allow assessors to delete a student from their caseload screen, to allow assessors to more accurately enter data for students, and to improve the timely submission of completed records. Kim Sherman and Aaron Glasgow of DRA worked closely with Aran Felix to design improvements to a variety of screens, using a visual medium of re-drawn screen shots to show changes (which will later be used in training with Qualified Mentors). Following approval of the online changes, Kim Sherman worked with Sevrina Tindal and Aaron Glasgow to align other aspects of the Alternate Assessment to the online systems improvements (Manuals, screen instructions, etc).

**Opened the Assessment System, New Mentor Training**

Aaron Glasgow worked closely with Kevin Araki at the training site for the September 29<sup>th</sup> New Mentor training to verify that all computers in the computer lab were appropriately configured to access the Alaska Alternate Assessment training site. Aaron Glasgow provided an updated Systems Requirements list to Aran Felix for forwarding to all new mentors and existing Qualified Assessors and Qualified Trainer/Mentors.

The system was opened on September 29<sup>th</sup> for the New Mentor Training and to allow returning mentors the opportunity to self-administer a refreshing skills assessment of training, scoring proficiency, administration and training manuals.

For existing Qualified Assessors and Qualified Trainers/Mentors, student data from 2007-2008 was removed from the system, but existing user identification and passwords remained the same. All users were reset to Assessor-in-Training status, pending successful completion of training or refresher training.

A "How To" document (also called a crib sheet) was updated for the 2008-2009 testing year. The Crib Sheet is a step-by-step description for accessing the Alternate Assessment training website, obtaining a user identification and password, and completing the online training modules. The Crib Sheet includes easy-to-follow written directions with screen shots for orientation.

In the next quarter, EED will merge and simplify several training documents, including the Teacher Participation Guide, Alternate Assessment Manuals, Crib Sheets, and other documents into one, streamlined and simplified document.

### **Additional Accomplishments**

- Errata from the 2007-2008 testing year were captured through harvesting emails and phone calls to the help desk. As issues were identified by EED, DRA or Alaska teachers and verified by DRA, corrections were recorded. This list of errata was submitted to EED.
- DRA updated all online documents (practice tests and training materials) and assessment web pages to 2008-2009.
- New Mentor Training  
Jerry Tindal and Aaron Glasgow of DRA partnered with Aran Felix of EED for a very successful training of new assessors on September 29<sup>th</sup> in Juneau. The team worked collaboratively to revise the training materials and Powerpoint. During the training, participants completed most tasks and training modules, with only a few modules remaining (to be completed prior to the All Mentor Training on October 27).



# **Alaska Alternate Assessment**

## **Quarterly Report**

October 30 through December 31, 2008

Dillard Research Associates  
October 8, 2008

## **Quarterly Report**

October 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008

### **Overview**

Over the past quarter, Dillard Research Associates has partnered with EED to conduct the Annual Mentor Training, facilitate the Extended Levels of Support Item Development Committee, and presented to the Technical Adequacy Committee on the technical adequacy of the Reading, Writing, Math and Science alternate assessments. In addition, DRA has submitted cousin items for all four content area assessments, and submitted Directory of Test Specifications for all four content area assessments.

### **Accomplishments**

#### **With EED, Conducted Annual Mentor Training**

On October 27, 2008, EED and DRA partnered to deliver the Annual Mentor Training at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. Topics included an overview of the 08-09 test year events and timelines; review of the teacher survey of consequential validity; an overview of the contents of the Alternate Assessment Manual, including an in-depth discussion of accommodations; a discussion of changes from last year's test administration, including an in-depth discussion of the rule change for moving from standard administration to ELOS; and an overview of the Alaska Alternate Assessment website.

#### **With EED, Conducted Extended Levels of Support Item Development Committee**

On October 28, 2008, EED and DRA partnered to conduct the Extended Levels of Support (ELOS) Item Development Committee (facilitated by EED). This day-long work session was designed to allow content experts to partner with special education experts in identifying early entry points for each of the four content area Extended Assessments.

#### **With EED, Presented to Technical Advisory Committee**

On October 29, 2008, EED and DRA (Jerry Tindal) presented to the Technical Advisory Committee. Technical Adequacy Reports for Reading, Writing and Math and Science were presented and discussed.

#### **Submitted Cousin Items for Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science**

The current Extended Assessment (2008-2009) exactly replicates the 2007-2008 version of the assessment. By administering the same test two years in a row, EED and DRA will be able to examine the performance of test items over two years. Next year's assessment will be comprised of operational (current) test items and field test (cousin) items. Cousin Items are designed to address the Extended Grade Level Expectations (ExGLEs) and closely match an existing item. In addition, Cousin Items were developed to address ExGLEs that were not addressed in the current, or operational, assessment.

EED provided a list of items to be developed, including a list of ExGLEs that had no operational items in the current assessment. DRA developed Cousin Items and packaged them into Scoring Protocol and Student Material booklets. DRA is in the process of re-

bundling the Cousin Item booklets into distinct grade band sets. These grade band sets will be used at the January 30 Bias and Content Review Panel meeting.

**Submitted Directory of Test Specifications Documents**

The Directory of Test Specifications document is an Excel spreadsheet for each content area and for each grade band within the content areas for the Extended Assessment. For each item in the operational assessment and for each cousin item developed, the document lists a unique identifier, task and item number, the ExGLE linked to the item, the item type, item prompt, item answer, the maximum number of points for the item, the recommended sequence of item delivery, and a Depth of Knowledge assessment (1 to 4 range). In addition, for the operational items, the mean correct value is listed which is also converted to a percentage. Based on the percentage of students who scored an item correctly, the item was rated as either Easy (67 to 100% correct), Medium (34 to 66%) or Hard (0 to 33%).



# **Alaska Alternate Assessment**

## **Quarterly Report**

January 1 through March 31, 2009

Dillard Research Associates  
June 29, 2009

## **Quarterly Report**

January 1, 2009 through March 31, 2009

### **Overview**

During the third quarter of the 2008-2009 contract year, Dillard Research Associates has partnered with EED to develop materials for Content and Bias Review, uploaded and made accessible the 2008-2009 alternate assessments, conducted a Pretest and Preview Mentor Audio Conference, provided Large Print and Braille versions of the Alternate Assessments, and co-facilitated the Content and Bias Reviews of Alternate Assessment cousin items, corrections were made to the Alternate Assessments and a Teacher Survey was posted.

### **Accomplishments**

#### **Developed materials for Content and Bias Review and Co-facilitated the Content and Bias Reviews of Alternate Assessment cousin items**

In partnership with EED, DRA developed and revised materials for the Content and Bias Review meeting. At this meeting, teams of content and disability experts from Alaska school districts met to review cousin items for bias and sensitivity issues as well as alignment to the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). Concurrent to the face to face Content and Bias Review meeting in Anchorage, experts representing the Blind and Deaf community reviewed the cousin items for sensitivity to Braille or Signing the test directions, prompts, or response choices.

#### **Uploaded and made accessible the 2008-2009 alternate assessments,**

Prior to the opening of the test window, the 2008-2009 test was uploaded for internal quality assurance review by DRA and EED.

#### **Conducted a Pretest and Preview Mentor Audio Conference,**

On January 26, 2009, an Audio Conference was conducted for Mentors to preview the secure test and data entry sites. The Audio conference had technology delivery problems, so not all Mentors were able to watch the computer component of the conference. The technology delivery problems will not recur in future years.

#### **Provided Large Print and Braille versions of the Alternate Assessments**

Qualified Assessors ordered accommodated Alternate Assessments for student who require large print or Brailled versions of the assessment. DRA facilitated the development of those accommodated versions, and delivered the Large Print and Braille versions to the school districts.

#### **Opened 2008-2009 Testing Window and Help Desk**

The testing window opened on February 23, 2009 and closed on April 10, 2009. The DRA helpdesk was open during that same time frame. Helpdesk questions and errata were logged for future reference and system improvements.

**Made corrections to the Alternate Assessments Teacher Survey was posted**

Feedback from the field necessitated corrections to four Alternate Assessment test items (Math 5.910A #4 and #5, Science 2.8 and Science 2.10 #1), reposted the Scoring Protocols and Student Materials, and posted Errata alerts to Assessors.

**Posted Teacher Survey**

A reduced/revised version of the Teacher Survey was created and posted for teacher completion.



# **Alaska Alternate Assessment**

## **Quarterly Report**

April 1, 2009 through June 30, 2009

Dillard Research Associates  
June 30, 2009

## **Quarterly Report**

April 1, 2009 through June 30, 2009

### **Overview**

During the fourth quarter of the 2008-2009 contract year, Dillard Research Associates has partnered with EED to develop guidelines for protégé packet review; close the 2008-2009 testing window; revise cousin items per Bias and Content Review; began filming new training vignettes; cleaned and posted AYP data; revised and posted Individual Student Report Guidelines and User Manual; posted Individual Student Reports by district; reset District Testing Coordinator access and passwords; submitted a research data file; and submitted all online code, video files, picture files and reporting systems.

In addition, DRA worked with EED on the TAC presentation and Peer Review response. A planning meeting was held in Portland on May 11 to develop the 2009-2010 deliverables list. A contract for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 was developed.

## **Accomplishments**

### **Developed guidelines for protégé packet review**

DRA developed a guideline document describing the steps and decision points related to scoring protégé packets for potential Qualified Mentors. This document will be included in the technical report as further evidence of a systematic training protocol and reliability.

### **Closed 2008-2009 Testing Window and Help Desk**

The testing window closed on April 10, 2009. The DRA helpdesk was open during that same time frame. Helpdesk questions and errata were logged for future reference and system improvements. A coordinated system of reminder emails and phone calls was implemented to ensure assessment and data entry completion. This effort led to 100% of identified students completing their assessments, and all student data being inputted prior to the testing window close.

### **Revised cousin items per Bias and Content Review**

Cousin items were revised based on comments by the Bias and Content Review committees and final determinations made jointly by DRA and EED. The revised items will be completed by mid-August, in time for a focused proofreading meeting.

**Facilitated a planning meeting in Portland on May 11 to develop the 2009-2010 deliverables list. A contract for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 was developed** Erik McCormick and Aran Felix (EED) met with Jerry Tindal and Kim Sherman (EED) in Portland for a day-long planning session. Aaron Glasgow (EED) joined by audio conference. The results of this meeting are represented in the 2009-2010 Deliverables schedule and included proposed changes to the training website, and to the Alternate Assessment secure website, including improvements to information available to Qualified

Mentors regarding Qualified Assessor progress in enrolling students into the system, testing the students, and inputting student test data into the website. The 2009-2010 Deliverables Schedule is the basis for the 2009-2010 contract, completed in June, 2009.

**Began filming new training vignettes**

In preparation for an updated training website, with training videos specific to the Alaska Alternate Assessment, DRA developed new training video vignettes.

**Revised and posted Individual Student Report Guidelines and Web Reporting System User Manual**

The Guides for reading the individual student reports for parents and educators were updated, primarily to reflect the current year. The User Guide to the Web Reporting System was updated to reflect changes in the Web Reporting System. The system was changed to allow district test coordinators to access previous years' reports for their districts.

**Cleaned and posted AYP data**

Working with EED, DRA cleaned the 2008-2009 AYP data file, and conducted the calculations necessary for AYP determinations of proficiency and participation.

**Posted Individual Student Reports by district**

Individual Student Reports displaying proficiency score and performance level for reading, writing, and math and for science for each assessed student were posted by district to each district's secure web reporting site. Emails were sent in May defining the timeline of report posting. Reports were posted on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

**Reset District Testing Coordinator access and passwords**

District Test Coordinators were informed on May 20 that they would receive new passwords to the secure reporting site. The email with passwords was sent June 19.

**Submitted research data file and submitted all online code, video files, picture files and reporting systems**

This deliverable was completed and uploaded to the secure transfer site on June 24<sup>th</sup>.